

## VIRGINIA AGRICULTURE

I continue to serve as the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. The work of the Committee affects the lives of every American, and is of utmost important to our region.

This past spring I toured area farms to discuss issues of importance to our Sixth District farmers including livestock and poultry health, animal identification, forest preservation, and conservation and rural development programs.

### 2006 Agriculture Conference

The 2006 Agriculture Conference will feature experts on issues of concern to Shenandoah Valley producers. Guest speakers will cover topics such as livestock and poultry health, conservation and rural development programs, farm lending, trade and many other issues of interest to our farmers.

I hope producers will take this opportunity to voice concerns, provide input and gather information on issues impacting their industry.

When: Monday, February 13, 2006  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Where: Hall of Valor at the New Market  
Battlefield State Historical Park.  
Located off Rt. 305 in New  
Market.

For more information, please visit my  
website or contact my Harrisonburg  
office at 540-432-2391.



## ENFORCING AND REFORMING OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS

I have introduced legislation which would eliminate the visa lottery program, thereby helping to ensure our nation's security while making the administration of our immigration laws more consistent and fair.

Each year there is a national immigration 'lottery' by which 50,000 aliens may become legal permanent residents of the U.S. Under the program, each successful applicant is chosen at random and given the status of permanent resident based purely on luck.

Perhaps most troubling, the visa lottery program is wrought with fraud. It is commonplace for foreign nationals to apply for the lottery program multiple times using many different aliases and other false personal information.

The visa lottery program is unfair to immigrants who comply with the United States' immigration laws, as it does not prohibit illegal aliens from applying to receive a visa through the program. It treats foreign nationals who comply with our laws the same as those who blatantly violate them, thereby sending the wrong message to those desiring entry into the United States and to the international community at-large.

The nature of the lottery is such that we have no control over who applies for admission to our nation. This flawed policy is foolish in the age in which we live. Those in the world who wish us harm can easily engage in this statistical gamble with nothing to lose. Our immigration policy should be based primarily on our national needs, security and economics and not in part on an arbitrary system, lacking even cursory checks.



## Congressman Bob Goodlatte 2005 YEAR-END REPORT

SERVING THE SIXTH DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

*This mailing was prepared, published  
and mailed at taxpayer expense.*

*Bob Goodlatte*  
PRSRT STD M.C.

### TOWN MEETINGS INFORMATION

★ **Augusta County/Staunton/Waynesboro**  
Wednesday, January 18th, 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Stuarts Draft Middle School  
1088 Augusta Farms Road, Stuarts Draft

★ **Amherst County/Lynchburg**  
Thursday, January 19th, 5:30-6:30 p.m.  
Amherst County General District Courtroom  
113 Taylor Street, Amherst

★ **Bedford County**  
Thursday, January 19th, 7:30-8:30 p.m.  
Forest Library, Community Room  
15583 Forest Road (Rt. 221), Forest

★ **Shenandoah County**  
Saturday, January 21st, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
Edinburg Town Hall  
101 Town Hall Avenue, Edinburg

★ **Harrisonburg/Rockingham County**  
Saturday, January 21st, 2:00-3:00 p.m.  
Dayton Learning Center  
290 Mill Street, Dayton

★ **Roanoke**  
Monday, January 23rd, 7:00-8:30 p.m.  
Roanoke City Council Chambers  
215 Church Avenue, 4th Floor Council Chambers  
Roanoke

★ **Rockbridge County/Lexington/Buena Vista**  
Tuesday, January 24th, 5:00-6:00 p.m.  
Goshen Town Hall, Council Chambers  
128 Main Street, Goshen

★ **Alleghany Highlands**  
Tuesday, January 24th, 7:30-8:30 p.m.  
Covington City Council Chambers  
333 West Locust Street, Covington

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## Congressman Bob Goodlatte

SERVING THE SIXTH DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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Dear Fellow Americans,

As we began the first session of the 109th Congress in January of 2005 we faced many challenges, including the war on terror abroad and growing budgetary constraints here at home.

I am pleased to report that in the past year, Congress has acted on these and other important issues facing all Americans. The economy is strong and continues to grow. The economy has created nearly two million jobs over the past twelve months and U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 4.3 percent is at its fastest pace in two years.

In addition, we are winning the war on terrorism because our men and women in uniform are defeating the terrorists, and the Iraqi people and Iraqi troops are taking control of their own future. There are now over 200,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces. Over 125 Iraqi police and army combat battalions are fighting in counterinsurgency operations alongside Coalition forces.

As Prime Minister Ibrahim Ja'afari notes, "You can't fix in six months what it took 35 years to destroy." The key is that there is discernible progress. Under Saddam, there was no freedom of speech or the press. Today, there are 44 commercial television stations, 72 commercial radio stations, and over 100 independent newspapers. Internet subscribers have risen from 5,000 before the war to 196,000 in September 2005. Terrorist bombs have not deterred Iraqis from building a promising future.

I invite you to take a few minutes to read through this newsletter, highlighting many of the critical issues facing our country. I also encourage you to visit my website, where you can sign up for monthly e-newsletters from my office, covering a variety of topics and legislative priorities.

In addition, I hope you can find time to join me at one of the town meetings I am hosting at various locations throughout the Sixth District. You will find a list in this newsletter. These town meetings are an excellent opportunity for you to share your thoughts with me. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Very Truly Yours,

*Bob Goodlatte*

### 2005 YEAR-END REPORT

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## MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

In 2003, Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, the first major reform in Medicare history. This legislation ensures that a voluntary prescription drug benefit will be offered to all 40 million seniors and disabled Americans in the program.

On November 15, 2005 Medicare beneficiaries began signing up for this new prescription drug program. Medicare beneficiaries have until May 15, 2006 to sign up for this new coverage without incurring a penalty. Seniors can choose from at least 10 national plans and several regional or state plans, depending on where they live, that cover brand name and generic drugs. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), a typical beneficiary with no coverage today will save about 50% on prescription drug costs.

The average plan will include the following:

- \$32 average monthly premium
- \$250 annual deductible
- Standard benefit: 75% of drug costs from \$250 to \$2,250 annually covered by Medicare

- Catastrophic coverage: 95% of drug costs over \$3,600 annually covered by Medicare

About one-third of seniors will be eligible for a Medicare drug benefit with little or no premiums, low deductibles, and no gaps in coverage. Those with the lowest incomes will be assigned plans and will pay no premiums or deductibles. People with limited income may qualify if in 2006 they are single and have resources less than \$11,500 or married and have resources less than \$23,000.

Everyone with Medicare is eligible for the coverage, regardless of income level and resources, pre-existing conditions, or current expenses. This benefit will help America's seniors stay healthy longer, and reduce the burden of financing the often-costly expense of prescription drugs.

Please contact CMS at 1-800-MEDICARE to sign up for the prescription drug program. If you need more information on this new benefit you may contact one of my offices or visit the CMS website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

## Working to Lower Gas Prices

On my trips from Roanoke to Washington each week I have been monitoring gas prices at stations along the way. While prices have come down some since hurricanes Katrina and Rita pushed them to their peak, many drivers still dread filling up their tank.

This should not be the case. Americans who work for a living need gasoline to get to work. They need it every day, and they need it at a price they can afford. Until alternative fuel technology becomes more affordable and convenient, our cars, our jobs, and our economic growth will run on gasoline, and gas doesn't just come from the pump—it comes from a refinery. While we can't help that demand for oil is growing around the world, which results in supplies getting tighter, we can increase the amount of gas we refine. America's demand for gas

averages 21 million barrels a day, but we only refine 17 million barrels a day. The remaining 4 million barrels comes from foreign countries at foreign prices.

What's more, the number of refineries operating in America has dropped from 324 to 148 since 1981, and a new refinery has not been built in this country since 1976. This thinning line of refineries is all that stands between us and even higher gas prices.

To address this precarious balance and increase American refining capacity, the House recently passed the Gasoline for America's Security Act. This bill will not only tackle short term supply squeezes like we recently experienced, but also deal with the unfortunate fact that we haven't produced enough gasoline for years. It will change the rules so that refiners will not be discouraged by

billion-dollar investments and the need to fight their way past hostile bureaucracies and overly burdensome environmental regulations. It also promotes conservation through carpooling and fuel efficiency awareness, bans price gouging, requires an FTC study of credit card company processing fees, which may inflate consumer costs, and promotes new pipelines to get crude oil and gas to refiners at lower prices.

I supported this bill wholeheartedly when it passed the House and you can be sure I will continue to support this important legislation as it moves through Congress. We cannot afford to leave refining capacity stuck in the 1970's while demand for gasoline continues to grow.

## CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT REFORM

At the beginning of last year, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, legislation which will curb the widespread abuse of frivolous class action lawsuits, while preserving the rights of citizens to bring such actions.

For the past six years I have been working to reform abuses in class action lawsuits. The passage of this legislation is a real victory for consumers. The Class Action Fairness Act will streamline the ability of the courts to deal with class action lawsuits by making it easier for those involved in the case to transfer suits from the state courts to the federal courts. This legislation stems from the abuse of what was meant to be a procedural device of last resort where people with identical claims, such as train crash victims, could bring their case to court.

In recent years, the courts have been flooded with thousands of frivolous lawsuits. The number of state court class actions is growing every day, with state courts continuing to approve settlements that give all of the money to lawyers.

The Class Action Fairness Act contains the Consumer Class Action Bill of Rights, including a requirement that notices sent to class members be written in "plain English" and provide essential information that is easily understood. The bill ensures that plaintiffs who have won their suits do not suffer a net loss because legal costs are billed back to the class members. The bill also includes provisions that protect consumers from being disadvantaged for living far away from the courthouse. These additional consumer protections will ensure that class action lawsuits benefit the consumers they are intended to compensate.

The Act doesn't limit the ability of anyone to file a class action lawsuit, and it doesn't change anyone's rights to recovery. The Class Action Fairness Act is a bipartisan, sensible set of reforms that will clarify the rights of consumers and restore confidence in America's civil justice system.

## Fighting Spyware



*Recently the House of Representatives passed legislation I introduced, the Internet Spyware (I-SPY) Prevention Act of 2005. This legislation addresses the most egregious activities that are conducted via spyware and makes those activities criminal offenses.*

*Spyware has been defined as "software that aids in gathering information about a person or organization without their knowledge and which may send such information to another entity without the consumer's consent, or asserts control over a computer without the consumer's knowledge."*

*This bill would make these actions criminal offenses:*

- *Intentionally accessing a computer without authorization, or intentionally exceeding authorized access, by causing a computer program or code to be copied onto the computer and using that program or code to:*
  - *Further another federal criminal offense (punishable by fine or imprisonment up to 5 yrs.)*
  - *Intentionally obtain or transmit "personal information" with the intent of injuring or defrauding a person or damaging a computer (punishable by fine or imprisonment up to 2 yrs.)*
  - *Intentionally impair the security protections of a computer with the intent of injuring or defrauding a person or damaging a computer (punishable by fine or imprisonment up to 2 yrs.)*

*Spyware encompasses several potential risks including the promotion of identity theft, by harvesting personal information from consumers' computers. Additionally, it can adversely affect businesses, as they are forced to sustain costs to block and remove spyware from employees' computers, not to mention the potential impact on productivity.*

## PROTECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

When our country was founded, those who had struggled for freedom sought to guarantee some of the very rights they had been denied in the countries of their ancestry. To establish themselves in a new land and ensure that this new country granted its citizens the basic freedoms such as freedom of religion, speech, and property ownership, they preserved these rights in a document that continues to govern the nation today: the Constitution of the United States.

Today, citizens throughout the country exercise the right to private property ownership for their homes, farms, businesses, and places of worship. However, by expanding the government's power to seize private property for economic development purposes, as the Supreme Court did in the case of Kelo v. the City of New London, the basic right to own private property guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution has been trampled upon.

When citizens cannot be assured that their land will not be grabbed up by the government and turned over to another private entity for economic development purposes, then the principle of private property rights becomes meaningless. If the threat of seizure looms over the head of every private property owner, we cannot expect anyone to eagerly purchase property and invest their hard-earned money into land that can be whisked away by government for almost any reason.

The Supreme Court's decision in the Kelo case essentially expands the ability of state and local governments to exercise eminent domain powers to seize property under the guise of "economic development" ensuring that no private property is safe from seizure. As Justice O'Connor noted in her dissent: "The specter of condemnation hangs over all property. Nothing is to prevent the State from replacing a Motel 6 with a Ritz Carlton, any home with a shopping center, or any farm with a factory." In defining "public use" so expansively, the Court essentially erased any protection of private property as understood by the Framers of our Constitution.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed the Private Property Protection Act of 2005, which I introduced with a bipartisan group of Members. Under this Act, a state or local government that uses eminent domain to take land from one private entity to give to another for economic development purposes will not be eligible to receive federal funds of any kind for a period of two years. While economic development is clearly crucial for many communities, this legislation ensures that this will be done with respect for our constitutional rights.

Protecting the constitutional rights of our citizens continues to be a top priority for the Congress. Private property rights are fundamental, and by passing this important legislation we have taken the necessary steps to further protect property ownership rights for our citizens.